

**Resistance front kills 2 SLA members**

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese resistance fighters said they killed two officials of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia and captured a third in fierce fighting Saturday. The Lebanese National Resistance said in a statement the clash occurred near the village of Kfar Falou in South Lebanon after its fighters ambushed a car driven by an SLA member. It identified the driver as Massoud Elias Massoud, who was taken captive. A photocopy of Massoud's identity card accompanied the statement. Israel backs the SLA in patrolling a "security zone" up to 15 kilometres deep along the border in South Lebanon. Kfar Falou is in a small area outside the zone but also held by the militia. Resistance fighters in the area frequently attack Israeli troops and their surrogates in the SLA. A spokeswoman for the SLA, speaking by telephone from the militia's Marjayoun headquarters, told Reuters in Tel Aviv a member of the SLA was kidnapped near Kfar Falou Friday morning but would not name the missing man. "He was kidnapped by ... the People's Liberation Army at about eight in the morning, there were no casualties, we have not heard anything about him since then," she said.

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**Moscow working for Iran arms embargo**

BAGHDAD (R) — The Soviet Union is consulting other members of the United Nations Security Council as well as Iran and Iraq about possible sanctions against Tehran to enforce a Gulf war ceasefire, a senior Soviet official said Saturday. Gaiibazar Pallayev, a vice-president of the Supreme Soviet, told a news conference: "A second Security Council resolution supposed to carry sanctions and an arms embargo against Iran, the party which does not apply the ceasefire order, is under discussion at the United Nations. The Soviet Union has for some time been consulting other Security Council member states and both Iraq and Iran on further steps to adopt a second Security Council resolution to impose sanctions on the party which refuses to implement Resolution 598." Moscow did not oppose such a resolution, he said. "But we think there is an urgent need to prepare the correct resolution to be an effective step in solving the conflict." He said Moscow would continue its efforts, "in a balanced way," to convince Tehran to accept a ceasefire. Washington has previously accused Moscow of obstructing action on an arms embargo resolution, but Pallayev said those who made such accusations were trying to cover up their own activities.

**PLO seeks help to ensure voyage of peace ship'**

TUNIS (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has asked the United Nations to ensure that a group of Palestinian deportees is not prevented from returning by sea to Palestine. He made the appeal in a message to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, U.N. Security Council President Vernon Walters and the head of the London-based human rights group Amnesty International. "We have no doubt about your support of these people's right to realise their wish to return to their motherland. We ask you to exercise your effective influence to ensure their secure arrival in their motherland," Arafat said.

**Iraq reports attack on ship**

BAHRAIN (AP) — Iraq Saturday reported a fresh attack on Iranian oil shipping lanes, seeking to keep up pressure on its Gulf war foe and force Tehran to accept a negotiated end to their seven-year-old conflict. A war communiqué issued in Baghdad said Iraqi jet fighters attacked a "large maritime target," military terminology for an oil tanker, at 10 p.m. (1900 GMT) Friday. "Our heroic air force will pursue its chase of Iranian maritime targets and destroy its oil resources, whose revenue is being exploited to continue the aggression on Iraq," said the communiqué, read on Baghdad Radio.

**Vatican official meets Siniora**

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican's foreign minister Saturday met with Hanna Siniora, editor of the Jerusalem Al Fajr newspaper, the second Palestinian figure to be received this week. The Vatican did not release details of the 30-minute meeting between Monsignor Achille Silvestrini and Siniora. Silvestrini Thursday met with Farouk Kadoumi, head of the political affairs department of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). After the meeting with Kadoumi, the Vatican issued a statement saying the PLO official "expressed the gratitude of the Palestinians for the moral support that the Holy See gives to the cause of the Palestinian people" and said the Holy See is anxious to find a solution "acceptable to all" involved in the Palestinian problem.

**Swiss march against Israeli policy**

BASEL (R) — About 500 demonstrators, some masked, marched through Switzerland's second largest city Saturday to protest against Israeli policy in the occupied territories, police said. In statement, the protesters demanded recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and condemned Israel's policy of military oppression.

**Khomeini sets up arbitration panel**

NICOSIA (AP) — Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini Saturday appointed a commission of ranking Iranian clergymen and politicians to rule in legal and administrative disputes between parliament and the powerful religious Council of Guardians. Khomeini's decree came in a letter disclosed by Tehran Radio.

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## Palestinians clash with Israeli troops in Hebron, Jerusalem

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies)** — Israeli troops shot and wounded two Palestinian demonstrators in the Israel-occupied West Bank Saturday and police fired tear-gas at Arab protesters in several Jerusalem neighbourhoods.

Soldiers opened fire after tear-gas and rubber bullets failed to disperse stone-throwing protesters in the village of Bani Naim, east of Hebron, wounding two people.

Israelis have shot dead at least 43 Palestinians since anti-Israeli protests began in the occupied territories Dec. 9.

Police fired tear-gas at Palestinian demonstrators in the Silwan neighbourhood of Aran Jerusalem, just outside the walled Old City, reports said.

The demonstrators raised Palestinian flags, blocked streets with burning tyres and threw rocks at police who arrested at least one protester.

The crack of tear-gas launchers could be heard and smoke from burning tyres rose from several

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Arab demonstrators burn tyres and hurl stones at Israeli troops in Nablus

**Qadhafi ends Tunis visit, meets Benjedid**

**TUNIS (Agencies)** — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi left Tunisia for a surprise visit to Algeria Saturday, the latest in a series of contacts with North African countries.

Qadhafi discussed his ideas for union between the region's Arab states with President Zine Al Abidine Ibn Ali during his two-day visit to Tunisia.

Qadhafi is said to have proposed the formation of a union linking Libya with Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.

Algeria is spearheading efforts to persuade Libya to join an existing regional non-aggression

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**Murphy holds talks with Syrian leaders in Damascus**

**DAMASCUS (Agencies)** — U.S. envoy Richard Murphy met with Syrian officials Saturday to discuss American proposals for Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Damascus Radio said Saturday the United States should adopt an unbiased policy and proposals "must take into considerations the necessity of ending the (Israeli) occupation."

The visit followed two months of Palestinian protests in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip that lent new urgency to efforts to help achieve a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Murphy, assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, met for 5½ hours with Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa after arriving in the Syrian capital earlier in the day. He was expected to meet

Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam in the evening and President Hafez Al Assad on Sunday.

"We had good long talks with the minister and his colleagues now," Murphy said after his meeting with Sharaa.

He added: "It covered ideas on the concept of the peace process. It covered the Gulf war, the need to move ahead to get that resolved. We also discussed Lebanon and certain aspects of our bilateral relations."

Murphy refused to disclose the outcome of the talks. "The outcome, I find, is always better if not immediately shared with the media."

He said he was carrying a letter

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## New American 'initiative' draws doubts, cynicism from analysts

By Lamis Andoni and Najwa Najjar  
Jordan Times Staff Reporters

**AMMAN** — As the Palestinian uprising continues in the occupied West Bank and Gaza there are indications that the U.S. may launch a fresh initiative to reinvigorate efforts for peace in the Middle East. So far, there have been conflicting reports on the substance of the intended American moves.

Regardless of the contents and the nature of the new American ideas, analysts and politicians express strong scepticism over Washington's intention and willingness to draw closer to the Arab demands for a just settlement of the Palestinian question. Some even express the view that any American move would aim at "containing the uprising and strengthening the Israeli stand."

Most analysts interviewed by the Jordan Times brushed aside the possibility that the Americans could present an even-handed formula, but some believed that the recent developments have led the U.S. to consider new ideas acceptable to all sides involved in the conflict.

Over the last two weeks reports in the Israeli and American press stated that the U.S. was putting forth new proposals to revive the Middle East process.

According to most of these reports, the "new American initiative" is based on the 1978 Camp David peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in that it refocuses the attention on the concept of "self-rule" for the 1.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

**Main principles**

Although the nature of the American "ideas" has not been clarified yet, contacts made by the Jordan Times with Western diplomats and Jordanian officials and a reading of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz testimony to Congress last week indicate that the main principles of the new American move appear to be as under:

— The U.S. is trying to combine new and old ideas in order to blend a new workable formula for peace in the Middle East;

— Since the procedure and forms of negotiations have been a point of difference among the parties involved, the new formula will focus on "substance" rather than procedure;

This means, according to one diplomat, the focus of American contacts with the various parties involved is on "what the whole process would lead to."

In other words, it seems that the Americans are seeking the approval of the parties involved on the final goal of negotiations rather than the negotiating procedures.

American officials refuse to disclose much about the substance except that "it is not self-rule by itself"; thus it is not simply a variation of Camp David, but a more advanced formula.

— According to Western diplomatic sources, the Palestinian aspiration to end the occupation as expressed by the uprising is taken into consideration by Washington.

**Change in approach**

A former Jordanian diplomat who follows American politics very closely said that the new signals coming from Washington indicated a change in the American approach to the peace process. "Until recently the Americans were concentrating on the process itself, while Arab countries were more concerned with what the negotiations would lead to," said the former diplomat, who asked not to be named.

In his view, what has been disclosed so far about the new American ideas "fits very well with Shultz's perception of the situation in the region and with his understanding of the mechanism of a peace process."

The former diplomat pointed out that the main principles which defined American position of the peace process had been the following:

First, that the solution should come from the area. "The American government has repeatedly implied that it was going to react and act," he noted.

The second factor is that American officials, particularly Shultz, have been always focusing on the occupied territories "almost as a separate issue from the whole crisis."

Thus, the uprising has fulfilled "the two preconditions" which would warrant an American reaction. "The uprising presented an action by one of the parties involved (the Palestinians under occupation) in the area which is seen by the Americans as the crisis area," said the former diplomat.

"Therefore I believe that Shultz means it when he talks about reinvigorating the peace process," he said. But the question

## King urges EC to bring about change in U.S. position on peace conference

**BONN (Agencies)** — His Majesty King Hussein has called on the European Community (EC) to exert its influence with the U.S. and accelerate efforts to convene an international conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The King, now on a private visit to France after talks with Italian and French leaders, accused the U.S. in an interview with West German Radio of hindering efforts to set up a peace conference by allowing itself to be swayed by extremist elements in Israel.

The King urged EC ministers, whom he is scheduled to meet in Bonn Monday, to "use all your influence for a change in the U.S. position," north German Radio reported Saturday. Excerpts from the interview were carried by Reuter.

According to the Washington Times, senior Jordanian officials accompanying King Hussein on his just concluded visit to France said that special American envoy Philip Habib, last Saturday in Amman, had "hinted at" U.S. willingness to accept an international conference.

The Jordanians cautioned that it was "simply too early" to tell how serious Washington is about holding such a conference, which in the past has been opposed by both the United States and Israeli



His Majesty the King

to convene the international conference.

"It's matter of opening actual possibilities for direct negotiations between all affected parties, and for that an international peace conference under U.N. auspices could be the right forum," he said.

Genscher, the current chairman of the community's foreign ministers' conference, will head a meeting Monday which will be attended by King Hussein.

**Jordan, Bulgaria discuss Mideast situation**

**AMMAN (Petra)** — Jordan and Bulgaria began talks here Saturday on the latest political developments in the Middle East and issues related to the Palestinian problem in particular as well as peace efforts in the region.

The talks, held at the Prime Ministry, were led on the Jordanian side by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thoukan Al Hindawi and on the Bulgarian side by Vice-President Peter Tanchev who arrived here earlier Saturday.

Settlers have smashed stone-throwners in roadside "arrests," smashed windows of Arab cars, set up armed road patrols, and on several occasions opened fire on Arab demonstrators.

Last week near Bethlehem, Arabs buried rocks at a bus carrying settlers past Dheishe refugee camp. Camp residents said half a dozen settlers got off the bus, chased the boys at gunpoint and took three or four with them.

Residents of the Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron set up armed road patrols last week, saying they wanted to provide a greater sense of "security" to Jewish settlers.

Settlers entered the northern West Bank town of Anata last Monday, violating a curfew and smashing several car windows in a nighttime raid.

The incident came after Israeli settlers and soldiers confronted demonstrators in Anata earlier that day. The Israelis opened fire, killing at least three people and wounding three.

We are keen to see this resolution enforced... we want to decrease tensions in the Gulf," he said.

Tanchev said the GCC had sent envoys to win support for a Security Council meeting to discuss

Iran's rejection of a ceasefire.

Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal visited Moscow last week and urged the Soviet Union to join efforts to force Iranian compliance. He is due to meet U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz Tuesday.

Iran has agreed to a dialogue, largely promoted by Syria, for talks with the GCC on improving relations strained by the war and differing political and religious

told Reuters.

"The general trend among us (the GCC) now is to search for new ways to deepen the existing GCC-Iranian talks to ease tension in the Gulf," said Bishara, in Amman to attend a seminar on Lebanon (See page 3).

The two-week trip took him to the United States, West Germany, Britain, France, Morocco, Italy, Greece and Turkey. In Rome he also had an audience at the Vatican with Pope John Paul II.

Mubarak has proposed a six-month cooling-off period in the occupied territories, during which Israel would halt new Jewish settlements, leading to an international peace conference.

Mubarak's calls for a conference won wide backing in Western Europe.

According to Israeli officials, Washington is seeking through indirect negotiations between Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Palestinians to achieve an interim arrangement for Arab "self-rule" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from early 1989.

The U.S. proposals, as reported by the Israelis, make no mention of an international conference which, as envisaged by most Arab states, would involve the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council as well as the parties to the conflict.

Turkey renews backing

Turkey renewed its backing for the proposal for an international Middle East peace conference Saturday after the 24-hour visit by Mubarak.

President Kenan Evren, Prime Minister Turgut Ozal and other officials took part in talks with Mubarak.

"Turkey and Egypt support Palestinian resistance in the territories... an international conference is the only way to a just and peaceful solution," Foreign Ministry spokesman Inal Batu said.

Television film of Israeli bearing Palestinians have sparked some indignation among Turkey's mostly Muslim population of 55 million and the right-wing Turcuman newspaper sponsored a day of prayer Friday.

**Mubarak returns home**

**CAIRO (Agencies)** — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak returned home Saturday from an eight-nation tour during which he sought support for a new peace drive in the Middle East.

He declined to comment on a new U.S. initiative in the Middle East, telling reporters at Cairo airport: "It's mere press remarks."

The two-week trip took him to the United States, West Germany, Britain, France, Morocco, Italy, Greece and Turkey. In Rome he also had an audience at the Vatican with Pope John Paul II.

# Car-bomb kills Amal commander in Beirut

**BEIRUT (AP)** — A booby-trapped car exploded in a South Beirut Shi'ite Muslim district Saturday, killing a local militia commander, police said.

The victim was identified as Abbass Awadah, 33, commander of Justice Minister Nabih Berri's Shi'ite Amal militia in the suburban Bir Al Abed district, police said.

The explosion occurred at 8:30 a.m. (0630 GMT), when Awadah turned on the ignition of his car to go to work. Three pedestrians suffered slight shrapnel injuries, police added.

No group claimed responsibility for the slaying.

The blast scene is about 50 metres away from the residence of Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual guide of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah extremist faction.

But police said the influential cleric was not a target.

Bomb defused near Air France office

Meanwhile an army explosives expert safely defused a powerful car bomb near an Air France office in Christian east Beirut early Saturday, police said.

They said army warrant officer Youssef Bitar, who defused the bomb, estimated its power at 40 kilogrammes (88 pounds).

The charge was rigged in a blue Peugeot automobile parked in front of a sales office for Air France, the French national carrier, in east Beirut's suburban district of Jal Al Deek.

There was no one at the office

raked three French embassy guards with automatic gunfire as they shopped in east Beirut's Dora district on Oct. 20. Lt. Christian Mondon and Warrant Officer Andre Cruz were killed while Pvt. Miguel Collignon was seriously wounded.

Military Attaché Col. Christian Goutierre, 60, was shot and killed near the embassy's compound in east Beirut's Hazmieh district on Sept. 18, 1986.

No group has claimed responsibility for the killings.

The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) Friday disclaimed any involvement in the attacks on Frenchmen in east Beirut.

"We had nothing to do with any of the Frenchmen's killings in east Beirut," said an ASALA statement distributed by hand to Western news agency offices in mainly Muslim west Beirut. "Our struggle remains focused against Turkey's fascist regime."

ASALA is one of several underground Armenian factions fighting for an independent Armenian homeland in eastern Turkey. It had claimed carrying out several terrorist attacks against Turkish targets in the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

The Armenian group said the denial was necessary because a Lebanese Christian faction called the May 9 Movement had recently released a statement accusing ASALA of killing the Frenchmen.

The May 9 Movement has not made itself known in Lebanon before.

Two gunmen in a speeding car

months ago.

Six Palestinian employees were dismissed after Stening turned in his report to the UNRWA headquarters in Beirut, the official said.

"Some of the sacked employees apparently had connections with a local commander in a Palestinian group, and he carried out the abduction to avenge the dismissals," the official added.

"Senior guerrilla leaderships have promised to deal quickly with the situation and ensure the safe release of the two Scandinavians soon. U.N. officials in Lebanon are optimistic," the official added.

UNRWA's foreign officials declined to comment on the Arab's version, but also said they were hopeful that the two would be released soon.

Members of the Sunni Muslim Popular Liberation Army (PLA) militia, led by Mustafa Saad, which controls Sidon, mounted a search for the two men but found no trace of them.

Militia sources in Beirut told Reuters the kidnappers were Palestinians who could be loyal to Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) or to Muslim fundamentalists.

The two men, who had supervised UNRWA operations in the

area, were last seen in Lebanon.

UNRWA's top manager in Beirut has called the abduction a "treacherous mistake" and warned that if the two were not freed soon all staff foreigners of the agency would be pulled out of Lebanon.

The Arab UNRWA official said Stening conducted a "hush-hush investigation that revealed massive thefts of fuel and medical supplies from UNRWA's pharmacies in Tyre and Sidon two

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UNRWA's foreign officials declined to comment on the Arab's version, but also said they were hopeful that the two would be released soon.

Members of the Sunni Muslim Popular Liberation Army (PLA) militia, led by Mustafa Saad, which controls Sidon, mounted a search for the two men but found no trace of them.</

## Zarqa nursing college project launched today

By Sana Atiyeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Health Zaid Hamzeh today lays the foundation stone for the nursing college and paramedical institute project in Zarqa, a Health Ministry source said Saturday.

The college, which would graduate 100 registered nurses and 25 legal midwives per year, is expected to be completed by the end of next year, according to the source. The institute is also expected to graduate 100 paramedics a year.

## Electricity workers elect new federation board

AMMAN (J.T.) — The General Federation of Electricity Workers has elected nine members to serve on its new board for the next four years.

The nine are: Samir Qarden, who won 1,178 votes, Hatnaf Al Akaleh (846), Issa Jariri (809), Mohammad Faouri (769), Fleith Dabouqi (765), Mousa Saoud (740) Said Husein Zakha (727), Hassan Ali Hussein (669), and Abdul Wadud Rabah (638).

Samir Qarden, who served as chairman of the previous board of

directors, said in a statement following the announcement of the results that his success in the election reflected a general recognition of his past efforts and diligent work in serving the electricity workers.

Qarden is expected to be made chairman of the new board, as he won the largest number of votes in the election held Thursday. The counting of votes continued until early Friday and the results were not disclosed until Friday morning.

## JMI, JUST review prospects for cooperation

IRBID (Petra) — Director-General of the Jordanian Medical Institution (JMI) Dr. Daoud Hanania Saturday visited the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) in Irbid and met with President Dr. Kamel Ajlouni.

Ajlouni briefed Hanania on the university's educational programs and medical faculty plans.

Hanania, who is also director of the Royal Medical Services, discussed with Ajlouni cooperation between JUST and the JMI, and later inspected recently-built infrastructure of the King Abdullah Hospital which will serve as a training hospital for JUST medical students.

## Arab Wings on call to serve time-conscious Mideast travellers

By Rania Atalla  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Royal Jordanian subsidiary Arab Wings, which provides executive jet charter services, in a little more than a decade has established itself as a self-sufficient company pioneering in moving time-conscious people around the Middle East.

In its 12 years of operation, Amman-based Arab Wings has also become a major regional service and maintenance centre for executive aircraft, and is considering introducing a domestic helicopter service.

With a fleet of 3 Saberliners (75 A), Arab Wings has more than just "plain" charters to offer. It flies time-conscious executives and dignitaries to their destinations, offering a wide-range of services including executive services, handling and maintenance.

When Arab Wings (AW) was established in 1975, "the idea was for a charter to serve businesspeople and government officials to move in the area," according to AW Managing Director Sharif Ghazi Rakan. "There was a vacuum which needed some thing like Arab Wings to fill it."

AW flies to wherever its customers wish to go; it has no specific flight routes. But with Amman as its base, and two other sub-bases in Dubai and Bahrain, most of AW's activity centres around the Middle East, particularly the Gulf region.

The advantages of AW over regular airlines is that when travelling with a regular airline, "a passenger is tied to the set schedule," Sharif Ghazi said, noting that "with our airplanes, it is the reverse: the plane is there for you, and whenever you decide to leave, the plane is ready for your service, just like a limousine."

The company was named "Arab Wings" because the original idea was for all Arab states to be partners in it. Though all



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday addresses an Arab Thought Forum session on the social and economic dimensions of the Lebanese crisis (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

## Mayors, municipal council heads urged to address public demands

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Yousef Hamdan Al Jaber Saturday urged heads of municipal councils to interact with their local communities with the purpose of identifying the public's demands, problems and proposals, in order to meet the way for improving public and municipal services.

Addressing 39 heads of municipal councils and mayors gathered at a seminar on higher administration in municipal affairs, the minister said that the mayor should be regarded as the first person responsible for the town, and that the mayor should work towards upgrading services and benefiting from scientific and technological development.

The mayor's work should focus on promoting municipal services, meeting the growing demands of a rapidly increasing population and the changes in the social structure, Jaber noted.

He said that many municipalities still suffer from negative attitudes among administrators, which tends to complicate work and retard development. Some mayors do not abide by the promises and pledges made to their townspeople before elections, and some tend to carry out projects in one area and neglect others, the minister explained.

The municipality, he said, is a social institution and not a mere building, and should deal with the public accordingly.

He urged mayors and heads of councils to give proper attention to organisational matters while implementing public service projects in their regions.

In addition, Jaber said that these administrators should try to stimulate social and cultural life through establishing public libraries and initiating other activities.

He said that Jordanian municipalities ought to prepare themselves for the advent of the 21st century by preparing studies and plans for improving social, cultural, economic and administrative functions, and through establishing data banks on services that can be

sources of information for further planning.

Dean of the Yarmouk University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Dr. Abdul Bari Al Durra also addressed the meeting, underlining the need to coordinate the efforts of all concerned parties in implementing service projects.

Durra was representing Yarmouk University President Dr. Mohammad Hamada. The university helped organise the six-day seminar.

The participants will discuss the implementation of development projects, mayoral skills, project planning, employing technology and enlisting the help of specialists in managing municipal affairs, handling financial resources, city and village organisations.

The mayors and heads of councils will be taken to Yarmouk University on the last day of the seminar for a final session and a tour of municipal councils in Irbid Governorate.

The Arab Thought Forum, he said, seeks to strengthen the ties

## Prince Hassan urges Arab assistance to Lebanon in efforts to overcome crisis

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Decisionmakers in the Arab World have many lessons to learn from the Lebanese problem, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan told a session of the Arab Thought Forum Saturday.

Addressing a session on the Lebanese war in a speech read on his behalf by Mr. Akram Zu'aiter, the Crown Prince stressed that there was a need to "understand the socio-economic elements that could contribute to solving the crisis." He pointed to the difficult economic and living conditions suffered by the Lebanese for the past three years.

"There is a lesson we, Arabs, must learn from the Lebanese war, related to the duty of the state towards the society," Prince Hassan said.

"If we all agreed that the state is a comprehensive legitimate authority whose mission is to control social interactions as a prerequisite for peace, then we should think deeply about the nature of the ideal state if we want to develop the society," he continued.

The Crown Prince said that "a state which the society seeks to destroy is unfeasible, as the state loses its raison d'être and becomes vulnerable to outside intervention."

Prince Hassan said that intellectuals should be seeking "a contract between the state and the society, and a creative balance in which the state serves as a fence around the society — a means of control and a tool of development."

The mayors and heads of coun-

cils will be taken to Yarmouk University on the last day of the seminar for a final session and a tour of municipal councils in Irbid Governorate.

The Crown Prince echoed a call by acting Lehman Prime Minister Salim Al Hoss for the attainment of at least a minimum level of consensus among Lebanese groups on a formula for resolving their problem.

Prince Hassan expressed hope that, in the next three months, the Lebanese people and the different parties and factions would arrive at such consensus on their battered economy.

The Crown Prince then referred to the economic situation in the Southeast Asia region which includes Lebanon and Jordan, among other Arab countries, and praised the important bilateral agreements concluded between Arab countries and the European Community.

He said that these agreements, coupled with the participation of Japan in the region's development, clearly represented part of an overall international cooperation.

## GUVS council stresses aid to W. Bank, Gaza

AMMAN (Petra) — General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) President Abdullah Al Khatib Saturday said that the financial aid which the union provided to charitable societies in the Kingdom in 1987 reached JD 1,032,000. He said that nearly JD 30,000 from this total was given to charitable societies in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to support the steadfastness of Palestinians.

Khatib was speaking at a meeting of the GUVS executive council held Saturday under the chairmanship of Minister of Labour and Social Development Rashid Urteka.

The minister paid tribute to the

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Obeidi returns from Tunis meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) Mahdi Al Obeidi Friday returned from Tunisia where he took part in the meeting of the Arab Economic and Social Council. Obeidi said that the meeting discussed the financial situations of Arab League organisations. Obeidi expressed his hope that member states would pay their contributions due to these organisations, in order to enable them implement their programmes.

### Teacher training course opens today

AMMAN (Petra) — The Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAJSWF) opens a course here today for training kindergarten teachers. The course will focus in particular on training the 15 participants teaching methods for kindergartens in rural regions.

### Meeting to address technical education

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Technical Education Federation Council will open a two week meeting in Amman Sunday to discuss a number of studies on planning technical education programmes in the Arab World. The meeting, to be opened by Minister of Higher Education Nasreddin Al Assad, will also hold a workshop on teaching methods, planning tests and the use of computers in teaching.

## CHILDREN'S DRAWING COMPETITION

The Public Energy and Electricity Services Office in Irbid plans to launch a children's drawing competition on subjects pertaining to energy saving and energy rationing.

### Conditions:

- Participants should not be above 13 years of age.
- Drawings should be 35 x 28 cm.
- Names and addresses of competitors should appear clearly on the backs of their drawings.
- Drawings should be submitted to the Irbid office through the children's schools or charitable societies by Feb. 28, 1988.

For more information, call the Public Energy and Electricity Services Office in Irbid, tel. 243647; P.O. Box 46.



The Public Energy and Electricity Services Office - Irbid.



One of the three Saberliner 75A's being serviced at the Arab Wings hangar.



Piper Cherokee belonging to the Royal Jordanian Air Academy serviced by Arab Wings headed by Sharif Ghazi Rakan (inset).

(RJ), we complement them."

The largest and perhaps strongest of AW's departments is maintenance and engineering, which employs 24 engineers and technicians comprising almost 50 per cent of AW's staff. According to Maintenance and Engineering Department Director Faisal Haddadin, at the very beginning, the AW aircraft maintenance was carried out by RJ. In 1981 however, AW established its own maintenance department and began offering maintenance services for other aircraft.

AW now maintains all 15 aircraft for the Royal Jordanian Glider Club, one Civil Aviation Authority aircraft, as well as the weather modification aircraft which operates for five months annually.

In addition to these 28 aircraft that are serviced on a regular basis, AW also services any other visiting aircraft. In 1981, AW serviced a U.S. Federal Aviation Administration aircraft. On a number of occasions, AW has also been called upon to service, maintain and repair aircraft for other companies. Haddadin proudly cites an incident when AW was called upon by a Swiss company to service an aircraft that had developed problems in Damascus. AW engineer and technicians were sent to take care of the problem, and within four hours of receiving the call, the

servicing business and the sale of spare parts to neighbouring countries has made the engineering department a source of considerable income for the company. In this respect, "it is fair to say that the maintenance and engineering Department is self-sufficient," Haddadin said.

For every hour of maintenance, AW charges its customers \$35. "These are competitive prices compared to Europe and the U.S. where prices can go up to \$42-47 an hour," according to the department head.

Income aside, the maintenance and servicing business has earned AW considerable experience.

"We have been doing that since 1975, and we have come a very, very long way," Haddadin stressed. "Our engineers do a very good job. They are experienced, hand-picked, top professionals, some of them with more than 25 years of experience," he said, noting that 40 per cent of AW technicians and engineers are ex-airforce personnel. The rest have civilian experience. "We feel that this combination works out perfectly, and we would like to keep it this way," Haddadin added.

Whether from a civilian or air-force background, AW engineers and technicians each year attend training programmes either at flight safety institutions in the U.S. or at the company that

team effort. Our record is due to a combination of the high standard of maintenance and the professionalism of our pilots," Haddadin said. "These are two things that go hand in hand."

With an eye to the future, AW is now looking at the possibility of introducing helicopter services in Jordan. According to Sharif Ghazi, such a service could serve among other things, to transport internal mail and to transport tourists between Amman, Aqaba, Ma'in and Petra.

"There is much potential for helicopter services in the country, but there are many factors to consider," Sharif Ghazi said. "All our studies so far have been positive, and we sincerely hope to introduce this service in Jordan, because it is needed and could serve a useful purpose."

According to Sharif Ghazi, Arab Wings is an asset to our country in that "it shows Jordan as progressive by offering the much-needed service. And, in its own way, Arab Wings is bringing hard currency into the country. We secured several maintenance contracts and hope that with our plans to expand, we will employ more people," Sharif Ghazi said. "I am proud to say that, right now, all our employees (except the four captains) are Jordanians. This contributes in a small way to serving the country."

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## Balance, yes; duplicity, no

WHY are we unconvinced of the sincerity of the United States' attempts to play the role of mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict? Better let an American official speak for his own country. U.S. Ambassador Armando Valladares told the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva a few days ago that the United States seeks a "balanced approach" to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, and added that "the United States recognises that Israel has legitimate security concerns and responsibilities, chief among these responsibilities is to maintain order. Without civil order, no lasting political settlement can be reached."

One asks: If the United States feels that the maintenance of civil order is such a sacred prerequisite of the peaceful resolution of political conflicts in situations of occupation, why is it that the United States funds, arms and diplomatically supports groups in Nicaragua, Namibia and Afghanistan who use assorted means of violence to force the occupiers or the established political powers in those places to engage in political dialogue?

We find the United States to be hypocritical and shameless in its attitude that the Palestinians should not engage in civil disorder to make a political point, but that American-backed groups are encouraged to use violence and civil disorder as a means of making a political point in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Namibia.

Yes, we would love to see a balanced approach applied to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict — a balanced approach which affirms the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians to self-determination and security and human dignity. But it is obvious that American exhortations of balance are insincere and unsubstantiated by American policies in other parts of the world. We, along with the rest of the Arab World, are fed up with duplicitous American appeals and the application of double standards in the conduct of American foreign policies.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that the initial reaction to American peace-making moves throughout the Arab World this week has been a sustained, powerful and genuine sense of disbelief? We would welcome a balanced American approach; in the meantime, we are offended by a superpower that preaches balance for others and practices imbalance itself.

## ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

### A/Rai: Prince analyses uprising

IN an address to the general assembly of the Arab Thought Forum Friday Prince Hassan analysed the strategic as well as the historic dimensions of the current uprising in the occupied Arab territory. After pointing out the underlying causes of the uprising in the face of oppression, Prince Hassan said that the revolt of the Palestinians has no doubt embarrassed the Israelis whose leaders had to admit that it was a spontaneous action stemming from the deep sufferings and resulting from 20 years of oppression. Jordan, Prince Hassan said, has been the first Arab country to call for an end to Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab land and demanded that the Palestinians be granted self-determination in their own homeland. He also said that Jordan, which is preoccupied with various issues cannot and will not forget or ignore national causes and national responsibilities. His address reached the silent majority of the people as much as it reached the intellectuals gathered at the Arab Thought Forum meeting. He called on the intellectuals and thinkers of the Arab World to reach to different sectors of the public providing them with moral and intellectual teaching and analysing for them the current developments and the present situation. The thinkers and intellectuals he said should not address the situation that currently exist in the Israeli-occupied Arab territory alone, but should rather extend to engulf the whole Arab area with a view to helping the majority of people to understand their present and work for the future.

### Al Dostour: Prince diagnoses revolt

PRINCE Hassan Friday diagnosed various aspects of the current Arab uprising in the face of Israeli oppression and tyranny, and said that the on-going revolt was a great development in the life of the nation. This revolt which was a reaction to 20 years of occupation rule, embarrassed and upset the Israeli leaders and confused their plans, and also prompted many Israelis to ask themselves about the benefits that they can reap out of their present iron fist policies. Prince Hassan called on Arab thinkers and intellectuals gathered at the Arab Thought Forum to reassess the situation in the occupied Arab territory, following nine weeks of uprising and confrontation with the Israeli army. Prince Hassan also referred to Jordan's quiet and practical support and assistance to the Palestinian people living under Israeli rule over the past years at a time when the rest of the Arab World was content with issuing mere slogans on supporting the Palestinian people's steadfastness without actually realising the facts about this people or doing enough for their support. Prince Hassan expressed the Jordanian family's pride in the fact that the Arab Nation has re-gained its solidarity at the Amman Arab summit meeting which marks a successful beginning for any discussion on economic and social cooperation.

### Sawt Al Shaab: Prince outlines Jordan's stand

PRINCE Hassan defined Jordan's stand with regard to the current developments in the Israeli-occupied Arab territory and the Palestinian people's revolt in the face of Israeli oppression in his address to the Arab Thought Forum on Friday. The Prince exposed in his speech Israel's false image and the Jewish state's deceptive methods in misleading the world public opinion about the realities in the occupied Arab land. The Prince pointed out that the heroic deed by our people in the occupied land came as a natural reaction to Israel's extremist measures and iron fist policy against the Arab people. This uprising, the Prince said, confused the Israeli leaders and caused trouble in their ranks. Prince Hassan urged the intellectuals and thinkers in the Arab World to help guide the public in understanding the present events and means dealing with them.

## Sunday's Economic Pulse

# Free enterprise system needs controls

THE CONCEPT of a free enterprise system is based on private ownership, individuals' initiative and an unimpeded interaction between supply and demand in a free market. However, these features cannot operate in a legal and organisational vacuum, otherwise they would produce chaos and lead to the law of the jungle.

Freedom as a description of an economic system normally means that individuals and groups are allowed to make their own decisions and choices regarding production, consumption and investment. Such decisions are not made for them, or imposed on them, by the government or its officials. This, however, does not mean the absence of laws, regulations and controls, which define and determine the rules of the game, and ensure equal opportunities and fair distribution of income, as distinct from equal distribution of income and wealth.

In Lebanon, for example, the system failed and collapsed, not because it was not free but because of the weakness of the state establishment. The Lebanese central government was unable to set the rules for the system and to enforce them. The economic freedom was reduced to sheer monopolisation, exploitation,

brokerage, and concentration of income and wealth. The logical and inevitable outcome was a disaster.

Some observers like to blame the political Lebanese system which allowed some margin of freedom in the fields of press, "political" parties, organisations, culture and economy. These freedoms should have led Lebanon ahead had they been practised under the protective umbrella of a strong central government willing and able to draw the line, protect the nationhood and hold the violators at bay.

Some writers assail capitalism and the free enterprise system while what they mean is to oppose the role of government as a regulator, and controller to ensure that this system operates properly and yield the desired results.

Our recent call to curb and regulate the interbank market is a case in point on how the rules of the game should be established and enforced to safeguard the free banking system and prevent malpractices.

The free enterprise system has indisputable superiority in creating growth, but that is not all. The door is wide open to ensure fair distribution as well. The accelerated income tax, insurance

against old age, unemployment and disablement, compulsory education, free medical services, welfare state, antitrust laws, accountability to the people, and competition on merit basis are only few tools which are purely capitalist.

The success of the free enterprise system requires more organisation, regulation, control, antitrust laws, accountability and crack down on the violators. Without these safeguards we end up in chaos.

We are promoters of the free enterprise system. The choice between capitalism and socialism is not the issue. We do have an established system which we describe as a free enterprise system. It should be supported and safeguarded by a comprehensive set of checks and controls to prevent wrong doing.

A free economy should not be taken to mean lack of accountability. The state must play a larger role as regulator and enforcer, to police a fair play of the game. It should not intervene in what citizens would like to produce, consume, buy or sell. What counts is not what system we adopt, but how much scientific methods we use to make that system more effective, fair and immune to cheating, corruption and fraudulence.

## The deadly silence

### The absence of debate on the Middle East in U.S. elections Democratic presidential candidates

The following is the second part of a study by Dr. James Zogby, director of the Washington-based Arab American Institute. Part one appeared in yesterday's newspaper, and part three appears tomorrow.



Gary Hart

Former Colorado Senator Gary Hart burst upon the political scene in the 1984 presidential race, propelled by a self-described campaign of new ideas. While some new ideas are evident in a survey of Hart's foreign policy position papers, they appear inconsistent with the candidate's stated Middle East formula and previous voting record.

Hart's Senate voting pattern is similar with those of his Democratic counterparts. An account of Hart's twelve years in the Senate reveals a record of cosponsorship of legislation to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, consistent support for all aid requests to Israel and opposition to arms sales to both Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

Furthermore, a 1981 article in the *London Times*, featured an AIPAC staffer who referred to Senator Hart and Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA) as AIPAC's "point people" in the Senate. In the interview, the staffer said that the two senators were the first they contacted to "get an issue moving."

Readying himself for the 1988 campaign, Hart delivered a series of lectures at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service entitled, "Enlightened Engagement: A Foreign Policy Framework for the 21st Century," articulating the candidate's own world view. "Enlightened engagement" was Hart's framework for policy in which U.S. military, economic, political and moral power would be exercised by "engaging other nations — not commanding them." Hart noted that we live in "a world where we can rarely impose our will."

Addressing the issue of the Middle East, Hart noted that "in the last half decade, American diplomacy has ignored too many of the Middle East's internal realities" helping to "perpetuate a costly stalemate." The U.S., Hart said, cannot "expect to simply rearrange things to our liking" and that "attempts to do so can backfire in the face of local nationalism."

Those who perceived a new direction in Hart's thinking on Middle East policy would soon be disappointed. In a recent interview on the PBS forum "Candidates '88" with Marvin Kalb, Hart reverted to positions identical to current administration Middle East policy. Hart stated that:

"improving the quality of life on the West Bank by an increase of money and job opportunities would lead to a decrease in radicalism;"

"The restarting of the Camp David initiative to bring Israel and Jordan together is the way to negotiate peace, without the necessity of including independent Palestinian involvement;" and

"There should be no Palestinian state."

In the same interview, when

asked if Palestinian rights was the central issue in the Middle East, Hart responded, "It is an issue, but the key issue is that the Arab states (referred to as "confrontation states") need to recognise the permanence of Israel."

opinion:

"Clearly mistakes were made in this area (the Pollard affair). But all nations collect information on each other... including friendly nations... But you have to recognise that if you get caught, you have to take the punishment."

efforts to stop U.S. aid to Syria and to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Since then his voting record has been consistently pro-Israel.

While Gephardt has a strong Syrian-Lebanese constituency and a number of Syrian-Lebanese staffers in his congressional and campaign offices, this seems to have had little impact on his Middle East position.

In a July article in the "Houston Post," Gephardt outlines his view of the Middle East. While charging that "United States influence and credibility in the Middle East are eroding because the Reagan administration does not have a consistent, coherent and energetic policy toward the region," his policy recommendations vary little from those of the Reagan administration.

Gephardt begins by asserting: "We must not lose sight of the fact that Israel's right to exist is a fundamental and unyielding principle that guides our foreign policy in the Middle East. Our bond with Israel cannot and will not be broken."

From there he asks how the U.S. can establish itself as a honest broker in the Middle East and outlines six steps:

(1) Presidential leadership is essential... We are seeing a worsening of the Western position and an opportunity for Soviet involvement that is not in our interest. The president must have a personal commitment to encourage the American role.

(2) Develop a consistent policy on terrorism. We must not capitulate to terrorism... We must deprive terrorists of their leverage by articulating a policy of not giving in to their demands... No foreign terrorist group including the PLO, should be given legal sanction or protection in the United States.

(3) Persist in the Camp David process. We must overcome Egyptian and Jordanian resistance to discussing the autonomy provisions of the Camp David Accords with Israel. Direct negotiations, under our leadership, are still the best way to peace.

(4) Support Israeli-Jordanian cooperation;

(5) Cool the Mideast arms race. Selling sophisticated American arms to countries at war with Israel only exacerbates tensions.

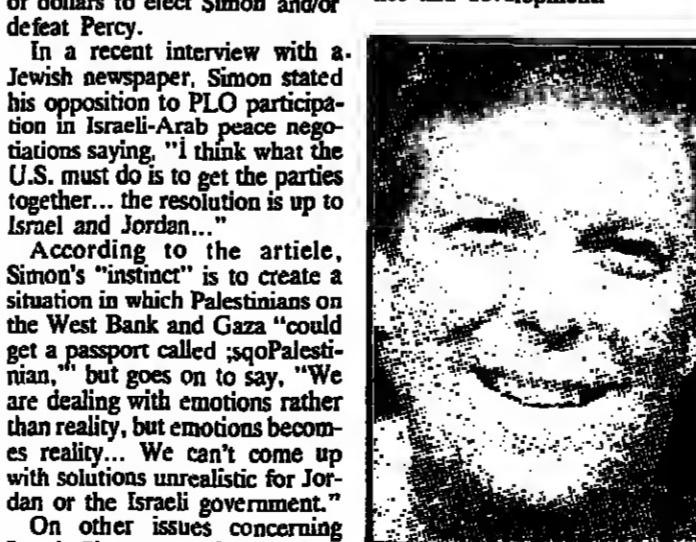
(6) Reaffirm our support for democratic institutions and human rights."

Jackson's positions on the Middle East are consistent with his overall view of the world and U.S. policy toward the Third World. Most recently enunciated in his: "Jackson Doctrine"; 1, this overall policy approach entails:

— Obedience to international law and support for human rights;

— Self-determination, not intervention;

— International economic justice and development.



Paul Simon

In 1980, Rep. Gephardt (D-Mo.) voted against congressional

States Dukakis:

"We have a vital interest in guaranteeing the survival, security and well-being of Israel, in minimising the political and military

influence of the Soviet Union and other forces hostile to the West, and in ensuring that we and our allies have access to adequate oil supplies. The creation of a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement remains a central goal of our foreign policy. But we should recognise that an agreement must emerge from the changing attitudes and circumstances within the region; it cannot be imposed by outside powers;

and we must recognise, as well, that the essential precondition to progress towards peace has been and remains a decision by Arab leaders to recognise Israel's right to exist, and to enter into formal, direct negotiations with Israel."

Dukakis then makes the usual Democratic gesture towards "building on the Camp David accords." Stating his intention to "encourage direct negotiations between Jordan and Israel," Dukakis fails to spell out how such negotiations are either possible or realistic, or would lead to a just peace."

With regard to the PLO, Dukakis says, "As President, I will oppose negotiations with the Palestinian (sic) Liberation Organisation until that group renounces terrorism (both in practice and in word), recognises the right of Israel to exist, and accepts the text of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338."

Albert Gore

Sen. Gore (D-Tenn.) is the self-styled "hawk" among the Democratic candidates in 1988. In recent months he has sought to distance himself from the other five Democratic candidates by taking a stronger stance on national defence issues and on U.S. foreign and military policy. Gore, for example, was the only Democrat to fully support the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers and a greater U.S. military role in the Gulf.

Gore is strongly supported, both financially and politically by ImPAC '88, a group of wealthy Jewish Democrats headed by Nate Landow. ImPAC '88 has pledged to support Gore's campaign. While predictably supportive of Israel, his positions remain vague. Nonetheless, Gore states that the U.S. ought not to take a stand in favour of an international Middle East peace conference without an Israeli consensus on the issue.

Says Gore: "I think there are a number of formulas that could suffice to support a meaningful resolution of some of these issues, but it is not for an American president or presidential candidate to stipulate what a solution should be. That is for the parties themselves... I am utterly convinced there are formulas that would work."

Gore declines to say whether those formulas involve territorial compromise but that "they would involve assurances of security and concerning the kinds of weaponry that would be close to the border..."

Gore's voting record while in Congress (since 1976) holds few surprises. However, he did not co-sponsor the bill to close the PLO mission and information office, although he has voted for most of the other anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab legislation that has come before him in recent years.

Richard Gephardt

In 1980, Rep. Gephardt (D-Mo.) voted against congressional

States Dukakis:

"We have a vital interest in guaranteeing the survival, security and well-being of Israel, in minimising the political and military

opposition

# Forgive and forget

International banks are changing their attitudes to Third World debts. David Lascelles and Alexander Nicoll review progress.

**LONDON** — After five years of dogged crisis management, cracks are widening in the strategies adopted by both debtors and creditors in handling the Third World debt problem. Although this implies a weakening in the solidarity which both sides, particularly the banks, have striven to maintain, it could also open the way to new progress.

The cracks have been opened — on the debtors' side — by a greater determination to test new ideas and — on the banks' side — by a growing readiness to recognise formally that many of the loans will never be fully repaid.

The background to this change was set by Brazil's declaration of an interest payments moratorium last February, still not ended, although recently some interest was paid. Subsequently, most of the world's large banks decided to make large provisions against their Third World loans: 25-35 per cent among the large U.S. banks who have the greatest exposure.

In the past few days, some important regional U.S. banks have taken their provisions to about 50 per cent of non-trade-related loans to problem countries. There is an element of competition in this: The bigger the provision, the stronger the bank, the less encumbered its future planning. But it also implies that banks are moving towards a position where they can actually write off their LDC loans on the assumption that they will never be repaid, as some have begun to do.

Such moves would have been unthinkable in the first throes of the debt crisis when many banks could have been bankrupted by their Third World loans. Now they are better capitalised, and strategically more inclined to bear the cost if it frees them from the burden and tedium of constant worry and rescheduling.

## Bankers differ

Many bankers still feel strongly that the larger, middle-income debtors such as Brazil and Mexico can and should continue to service their debts. Other bankers are more prepared to take what they can get.

Such shifts in the attitudes of both debtors and creditors could upset the delicate balancing act which has staved off disaster so far. Indeed, the World Bank has expressed reservations about recent trends in the relationship between the two.

In a report, it said that higher provisioning by banks and building up of arrears by debtors threaten to break the mould in which the management of debt problems has been set since 1982. Provisions, it argues, reduce banks' incentive to continue participating in new loans, and conversely, payments suspensions make it harder for debtors to negotiate with creditors. It called for greater co-operation between the two sides and more leadership from governments in the industrialised world.

This co-operation could be forthcoming — as long as banks are prepared to use their provisions to build more flexibility into their negotiating positions.

The differing views among bankers have been spotlighted by Mexico's innovative loans-for-bonds scheme, announced in December. Effectively, this invites banks to compete with each other

to take what are intended to be once-and-for-all losses on their Mexican loans. It is still far from clear how many banks will participate in this month's auction.

Like other debtors, Mexico has watched banks not only making provisions but also trading loans among themselves at about half their face value. It sees this as an admission by banks that there is little chance of the loans being fully repaid, and is chagrined that it is still expected to service them at full value.

## Mexico's plan

Mexico's plan is evidence of debtors' growing frustration with a rescheduling process which appears to condemn them to years of heavy debt-service payments without the resources to finance significant economic growth.

Latin American debtors have found it increasingly difficult to reconcile the demands of foreign creditors for economic adjustment with domestic political constraints. Already this year, Brazil — in bankers' eyes — has gone back on a promise to keep interest payments current from the beginning of 1988. It says it never made such an undertaking to end its payments moratorium.

The Mexican plan attempts to capture the discount at which loans are trading. It invites banks to tender existing loans in return for a smaller amount of bonds. These would be of better quality than the loans they replace — principal but not interest will have U.S. government backing — and would pay a better return. Mexico's debt burden would be lightened and the banks would have a better and more saleable asset than they have now.

Banks cannot help but welcome such a positive scheme which is in line with their own "menu" approach of alternative financing methods, designed to refresh what was clearly a worn-out debt strategy. Indeed, the Mexican bonds are really an elaboration of so-called "exit bonds" which excuse the banks taking them from participating in future new loans.

For each bank, however, the offer involves complex mathematics depending largely on individual capital, position and regulatory environment. Which course of action produces the best return?

To bid aggressively and take a substantial loss on the loans tendered — taking a bond which is likely itself to fall to a discount? To sell loans for cash instead?

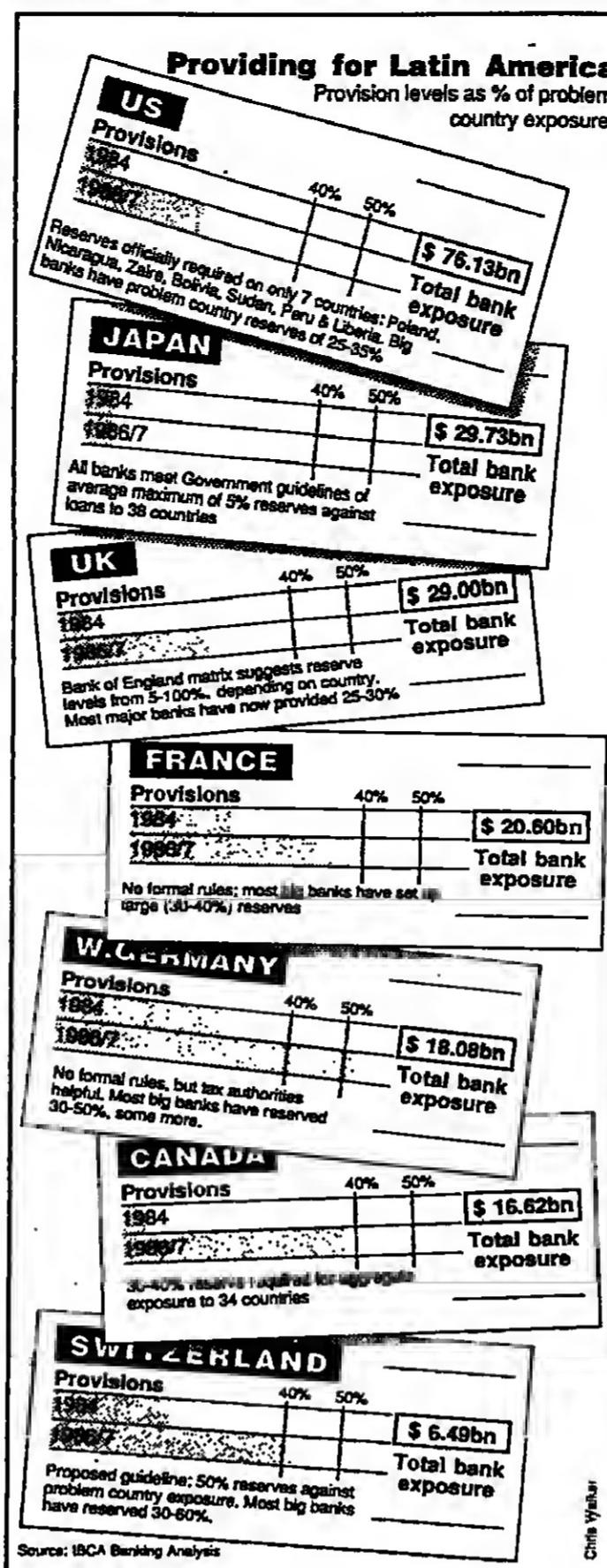
To take no action at all, hoping that Mexico's eased debt burden will actually enhance the quality of existing loans?

The answer will vary from bank to bank.

## An important precedent

More fundamentally, this plan forces each bank to consider its future strategy and the adequacy of its provisions. It will set an important precedent if it is successful in attracting enough competitive bids. Banks which take part will have to write off a portion of their existing loans, accepting for good that they will not be fully repaid.

It is significant that the plan carries the stamp of Morgan Guaranty Trust, the New York bank which is acting as Mexico's agent. This is one of the biggest lenders and a member of the



Source: IBCA Banking Analysis

to do. Both Bank of Boston and Amex Bank said they still expect to be repaid in full — and they will use any interest they receive in the meantime to write down other debts. The Mexican scheme involved a commitment to forgive debt, which is why so many banks oppose it.

Continued involvement in rescheduling and calls for new money. A bank writing off its debt would not escape any obligation to participate in future efforts to raise new loans to help finance interest payments — unless it has formally agreed to forgive the debt. So it would not shake off the problem of being a Third World creditor.

The debate about write-offs is sharpened by doubts over which loans should be written down and by how much. The loans which Bank of Boston and Amex wrote off were to specific types of borrowers, which they did not identify, although Amex said its loans were all in the private sector.

Bankers could argue with some force, however, that there is no need to write off loans totally which continue to trade at 50 per cent of their face value in the secondary market. However, bankers know that this market is an unreliable guide to second-hand loan values, and they would never be able to sell a useful amount of loans at once.

Murphy was expected to visit Saudi Arabia and Israel as part of his Middle East tour.

"This affirms continuation of the American policy in its way which is hostile to our people and our cause," it said in a communiqué issued Friday night.

## Qadhafi ends visit

(Continued from page 1)

from U.S. President Ronald Reagan to Assad, but would not disclose its contents. "No further details," he said before boarding the car of U.S. Ambassador William Eagleton.

Before leaving Washington, State Department spokesman Charles Redman said the U.S. objective was "face-to-face negotiations to resolve the problems which have existed for so long between Israel and its neighbours."

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## Qadhafi ends visit

(Continued from page 1)

"In truth, I am very happy and incapable of expressing what I feel about my pride in my brother Zine Al Abidine Ibn Ali and his collaborators," Qadhafi said before leaving Tunis.

The visit was Qadhafi's first to Tunisia since 1984.

Qadhafi also met Saturday with Chadi Khli, secretary-general of the Tunis-based Arab League.

Qadhafi flew to Annaba in eastern Algeria to meet with Algerian President Chadli Benjedid.

The official Algerian news agency APS said later, Qadhafi arrived at Annaba near the Tunisian border where he was met by Benjedid, Foreign Minister Ahmad Taleb Ibrahim and Interior Minister Al Hadi Khedri.

## New U.S. 'initiative' draws doubts

(Continued from page 1)

professor of political science at the University of Jordan Kamel Abu Jaber, head of the Amman World Affairs Council.

According to Abu Jaber, Reagan will not engage actively in the region less his party's chances of winning the presidential elections are undermined. Reagan also appears to be careful not to damage his own retirement plans which would need the support of the American community, which is heavily influenced by the Zionists, Abu Jaber said.

But even if the U.S. is serious about reactivating the peace process, the direction that any initiative would take will be influenced by the inherent American-Israeli relationship, said Parliament member Fuad Faraj.

Faraj sees no hope that the U.S. will shift its support for Israel since Israel serves specific American interests in the region. These interests, according to Faraj, include maintaining the fragmentation of the Arab world (started by the British colonialists), creating political unrest in the region and consequently ensuring a stable market for American arms.

Furthermore, Faraj argues, due to the special Israeli role in promoting American interests and playing a pivotal part in some of the American covert operations in the region and elsewhere, Israel has acquired a "blackmailing power" in the U.S.

For most analysts this pessimistic outlook was only enhanced by the American attitude towards the Palestinian uprising though some argued that the U.S. position was undergoing real changes.

A staunch advocate of this view is a former minister and the leader of the Democratic Unionist gathering, Jamal Al Shaer, who believes that the Palestinian uprising has made Washington reconsider its position on the Middle East problem.

## Uprising created new facts

"The Palestinian uprising has reminded the Americans that the Palestinian question cannot be shelved," said Shaer. He also argued that the uprising might have changed the American perception of the situation in the occupied territories and of a possible settlement to the problem. "The uprising has clearly proved that what the people want is not an improvement at the quality of life but an end to the occupation," he said.

In his opinion, the uprising has created new facts which have further influenced the American position. These new factors include the split within the American Jewish community, the differences among world Jewish leaders and a changing attitude of the American public towards Israel.

The American administration is also concerned not to alienate its Arab allies "who support and admire the American democracy," according to Shaer.

According to this analysis, it has now become an American interest to move towards reviving the peace process. "The Americans feel that there is something they can do to limit the Soviet role," said Shaer.

Shaer's views are shared by a former Jordanian diplomat. "The U.S. feels isolated and cornered and has to do something to appease the Arab countries," said the former diplomat.

But he expressed doubts that the American move will meet Arab demands or expectations. He noted that all ideas which had been "leaked" to the press so far fell short of fulfilling the Arab demands for an international peace conference and addressing the Palestinian question in all of its aspects.

"Therefore, what is the use of any American move if it cannot be accepted by the parties involved?" he asked. "The U.S. is not helping the Arab governments to take any step further."

## No more than a tactic

Other analysts go further by arguing that any new American step or initiative will not be more than a tactic to fuel the uprising by creating the illusion to the Arab governments that there is still hope and bypassing the call for an international peace conference.

This view is shared by Arar, Abu Jaber and Saleh. "In my view, whatever the U.S. is suggesting aims at gaining time to enable Israel to crush the Palestinian uprising and at excluding the idea of an international peace conference," Arar said.

Seen in this context, the same analysts did not rule out the possibility that the U.S. would try to build upon the old-new concept of "self-rule."

They believe that the U.S. position has drawn closer to the Israeli right-wing Likud party, which calls for "self-rule" for the Palestinians in the occupied territories within a one-year interim period.

## Israeli politics

Abu Jaber commented: "The Palestinian uprising is working against the Labour Party and for Likud because of the composition of the Israeli electorate, seen in the shift to the right in Israeli polls. Washington is also watching this trend and they like to support a winner."

But a Palestinian analyst said that it was unlikely that the Americans would endorse "self-rule" by itself "since it has been already rejected by Jordan."

"Therefore, a new American initiative should include new ingredients that would make it appealing to Arab governments and at least to a segment of the population in the occupied territories," he said.

According to the same analyst, one of the American objectives of floating new ideas could be to create "a split in the united Palestinian front in the territories and within the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)."

Shaer strongly opposes such an assessment. He argues that the Arab countries and the PLO should seize the opportunity and seriously consider the new American proposals.

He even supports a reported, albeit unconfirmed, American plan, to hold municipal council elections in the occupied territories, thus forming some form of Palestinian "self-rule" pending the convening of an international peace conference in September.

## New age crystals not just another pretty rock

By Anna Sobkowska  
Reuters

**NEW YORK** — For years crystals were used to keep radios tuned, watches accurate, and computers running. One type was even a girl's best friend.

Now the old dependable crystal has become a "new age" phenomenon — part of the mix of spirituality and self-improvement in vogue in the 1980s.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the United States now use crystals for everything from curing headaches and energising their sex lives to making contact with past lives or outer space.

Donna Sessler, a jewellery designer who calls herself "a spiritual gemologist and healer," describes crystals as "life force, God force, God in action in physical form."

Crystals are rocks, but not all rocks are crystals. While the molecular structure of rocks is random, the crystalline structure is beautifully ordered.

To achieve this order — which goes against the universal tendency towards entropy, or chaos — tremendous energy is required over long periods.

A former suburban teacher, Sessler is now a minister in the Church of Tzaddi, "a universal metaphysical church of truth and light for the coming age of aquarius." She teaches on crystals at an adult education centre.

## Love your crystal

"How do you clear a cloudy crystal" (if you love a crystal it will clear for you), Sessler asked.

What are chakras? (there are seven chakras, or energy centers on the body. A crystal applied to the navel chakra, for example, will increase the power to love).

One young woman wondered why holding certain crystals made her dizzy. Sessler explained she could be "over-amplified" by the intense energy emanating from crystals and recommended holding a "grounding" stone to counteract the effect.

## A cure for every ailment

Sessler uses many types of crystals for healing, including agate for hardening tender gums, azurite for revitalising damaged tissue, diamond for respiratory problems, garnet for helping the liver get rid of toxins, and green tourmaline for soothing

or pain asking for the right crystal," he said, scoffing at what he calls "the take two tonics and call me in the morning school of healing."

But he does believe in the power of crystals to heal, which he says comes from using them as "tools to be still with, to meditate with, to help explore your inner reality."

"A loony trend that originated in the loony centres of the country," he said. Dr. George Harlow, Curator of mineral sciences at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, describes the trend as "a loony trend that originated in the loony centres of the country," he said. Dr. George Harlow, Curator of mineral sciences at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, describes the trend as "a loony trend that originated in the loony centres of the country," he said.

Richard Berger, the founder of Crystal Resources, a store on Manhattan's smart East Side, is also impatient with some of the claims about crystals.

"People are constantly coming into the store with a specific ache

The store reports the line has been selling briskly.

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## Liverpool stumbles against West Ham; Luton beats Oxford

**LONDON (Agencies)** — Runaway leaders Liverpool suffered a rare indignity Saturday when they stumbled to a 0-0 draw at home to West Ham and found themselves upstaged by the goal exploits of two of the English First Division's least fashionable clubs.

While Liverpool struggled to extend their club record unbeaten start to the season to 25 matches, Luton beat Oxford 7-4 in an extraordinary clash in front of only 8,000 fans at Kenilworth Road.

Liverpool's point against West Ham kept them 15 points clear of Nottingham Forest and Manchester United at the top. Forest beat Chelsea 3-2 and United, 30 years to the day after the Munich air disaster killed eight of the "Busby Babes," beat Coventry 1-0.

Luton, unbeaten in eight games, made a storming start against Oxford and led 2-0 after only 19 minutes thanks to goals from Mick Harford and Brian Stoen.

But Oxford fought back to make it 3-2 at the interval. Dean Saunders with a penalty and Martin Foyle sandwiching another Luton strike from Darren McDonaugh.

Luton striker Mark Stein then scored an 11-minute hat-trick at the start of the second half. Oxford replying through Richard Hill, to put the home team 6-3 ahead and further goals followed from Harford and Les Phillips before the final whistle.

The two teams meet again Wednesday at Oxford in an English League Cup semifinal first leg.

In Scotland, Glasgow Celtic stayed ahead of city rivals Rangers, at the top of the Premier League, but Rangers' 2-1 win at Aberdeen was marred by the dismissal of international defender

"Busby Babes" and at the time one of the world's most exciting club sides, had several chances to win against West Ham, but were wayward with their finishing and had to settle for only their sixth draw in 25 unbeaten league outings. It was, however, their 10th successive match without conceding a goal.

Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough had his son Nigel to thank for his team's narrow win over Chelsea. Striker Clough returned to the team after injury for the first time since boxing day and scored the winner with a 60th minute penalty.

Earlier, the second-placed team — who still lead Manchester United on goal difference — had gone into a 2-0 lead with goals from Colin Foster and new boy Gary Crosby before Chelsea responded early in the second half with two goals in four minutes from Terry Dixon and Kevin Wilson.

Most of the spotlight fell on Old Trafford, home of Manchester United. Players and fans of United and visiting Coventry City observed an emotional one minute's silence to mark the 30th anniversary of the Munich air crash.

The accident, which occurred on Feb. 6, 1958, took place as the United team, under the management of Matt Busby, was en route home from a European champions cup match in Belgrade.

Most of the team, known as the

IOC begins week-long deliberations at Calgary

**CALGARY, Alberta (Agencies)** — The International Olympic Committee (IOC) will consider this weekend what sanctions to impose against countries boycotting the games.

IOC Administrator Raymond Gafner told Reuters Friday that a working group set up in December was expected to make a recommendation within the next 48 hours.

The group's views will be considered by a weekend meeting of the IOC executive board before being put forward for ratification by the full IOC session next week.

The IOC must try to resolve the dilemma posed by political boycotts. While it is intent on punishing countries which withdraw from the games after accepting an invitation to compete, it is also eager to avoid imposing further penalties against the athletes.

"In my opinion, it is absolutely clear that we must do something, but we must remain flexible," Gafner said. "There must be some form of sanctions but it must remain possible for the ex-

ecutive board to judge each case separately."

Executive board sources suggested the IOC might seek to resolve the problem by ruling that boycotting countries would be denied a share of the revenue produced by the games.

But there seemed little likelihood of a games ban being imposed on boycotting countries, despite a warning in December by IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch that such a measure might be considered.

The Seoul Olympics in September have attracted a record entry of 161 nations despite concern over a possible Communist boycott in support of North Korea's demands for a share of the games.

Doping will also be a major issue for the IOC before the Winter Olympics open Feb. 13 and the executive board is expected to consider the case of Nikolai Gulyayev, the Soviet speed skater at the centre of a steroids controversy.

Norwegian officials have alleged Gulyayev sold steroids to Norwegian skater Stein Krosby and have asked for the Soviet world champion to be banned from the games.

"In my opinion, it is absolutely clear that we must do something, but we must remain flexible," Gafner said. "There must be some form of sanctions but it must remain possible for the ex-

## LEAGUE STANDINGS

**LONDON (AP)** — Standings after Saturday's British soccer matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against and points):

English League							
Division One	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	25	19	6	0	59	11	63
Nottingham Forest	25	14	6	5	49	25	48
Manchester United	26	13	9	4	39	25	48
Everton	25	12	7	6	36	16	43
Queens Park Rangers	26	12	7	7	32	28	43
Arsenal	26	12	6	8	37	25	42
Wimbledon	25	11	8	7	39	30	41
Luton	25	11	5	9	39	30	38
Sheffield Wednesday	26	11	4	11	33	39	37
Newcastle	25	8	9	8	30	35	33
Tottenham	26	9	6	11	26	31	33
Southampton	26	8	10	8	34	38	32
West Ham	26	7	10	9	28	34	31
Chelsea	27	8	7	12	33	45	31
Portsmouth	27	6	11	10	26	43	29
Norwich	26	7	5	14	23	33	26
Coventry	24	6	7	11	24	39	25
Derby County	24	6	6	12	21	30	24
Watford	26	5	8	13	17	32	23
Oxford	25	6	5	14	32	53	23
Charlton	26	4	8	14	23	40	20

## Scottish League

Premier Division							
Celtic	31	20	9	2	57	19	49
Rangers	32	20	6	6	60	22	46
Harts	32	17	12	3	60	24	46
Aberdeen	32	16	12	4	45	19	44
Dundee	31	14	6	11	58	40	34
Dundee United	32	11	10	11	34	36	32
Hibernian	32	8	13	11	29	35	29
St. Mirren	31	7	11	13	33	45	25
Motherwell	32	9	6	17	26	44	24
Falkirk	32	6	8	18	30	59	20
Dunfermline	31	5	8	18	24	60	18
Morton	32	2	9	21	22	75	13

## Scottish Premier League

In Scotland, Andy Walker hit the only goal of the game to score Celtic's 1-0 home win over Motherwell and Rangers, inspired by player-manager Graeme Souness, won a stormy match at Aberdeen 2-1.

English goalkeeper Chris Woods, returning to the team after four weeks out with injured knee, was Rangers' hero with a

series of fine saves after Gough was sent off for tripping Willie Cuthbert in the 54th minute.

Ally McCoist and Gough had put Rangers 2-0 ahead by half-time, but Jim Bett pulled a goal back with a 46th minute penalty.

Hearts moved up to third and proved their challenge remains a powerful one by thrashing St. Mirren 6-0 on their own ground.

John Colquhoun scored a hat-trick and John Robertson twice.

With seven time Wanamaker

mile winner Eamonn Coghlan of Ireland sitting out this meet because of back injury, compatriot O'Sullivan surged to his second indoor games Friday.

However, the only world indoor best in the 81st Millrose meet at Madison Square Garden went to American Tim Lewis in the mile walk. Lewis' time was five minutes 33.53 seconds as he eclipsed his old mark of 5:38.02 which he set last year.

Millene came closest to a world record. Her winning time of 4:21.45 was the second fastest in the world. The world indoor record of 4:20.5 was set in 1982 by American Mary Decker.

Millene, the 1984 Olympic gold medalist in the 800 metres, took the lead from Briton Kirsty Wade with one lap to go and pulled away. Wade finished second in 4:23.86.

In her indoor season debut, Joyner-Kersee was aiming for the world indoor long jump record of 24 feet, 7 1/4 inches (7.32 metres) set by Heike Drechsler of East Germany.

Instead, the reigning world champion in the heptathlon and outdoor long jump had to settle for the Millrose meet record of 22 feet, 7 1/4 inches (6.79 metres).

Millene also set a world indoor best in the 800 metres, running 2:04.82, which is the second fastest in the world.

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Millene

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Jordanian-Saudi committee meets tomorrow

AMMAN (J.T.) — Developing Jordanian-Saudi economic and trade relations will be the focus of talks to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Monday by the Jordanian-Saudi Joint Economic Committee. The Jordanian side will be led by Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Saqqaf who will also discuss means of facilitating the flow of goods and travel between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Saqqaf will be accompanied by Industry and Trade, Interior, Transport and Customs officials and representatives from the Royal Scientific Society, and the Amman chambers of industry and commerce.

## Ma'an to spend JD 0.8m on roads, walls

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Works Department in Ma'an Governorate will spend a total of JD 836,000 on roads and maintenance of walls during 1988, according to department director Awad Abu Hilaleh. He said that work on a number of roads will begin in the coming days according to plans set by the department and approved by the Ministry of Public Works.

## Swiss exhibitions invite Jordanians

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Chamber of Commerce has received invitations to take part in a number of international exhibitions to be held in Switzerland this month. These exhibitions will be held in Zurich, Lucerne, Montreux and Berne for displaying products ranging from shoes to industrial goods.

## Algeria offers to build gas pipeline across Morocco

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algeria has offered to build a gas pipeline across neighbouring Morocco to Europe if a solution to the Western Sahara war begins to emerge, the official news agency APS reported Friday.

Diplomats said the suggestion by President Chadli Benjedid, reported by APS, held out substantial benefits for Morocco in exchange for a peace settlement in the former Spanish colony, while Algeria supports Polisario guerrillas fighting against Morocco.

The president told a meeting of governors Thursday that "in the event that a settlement begins to emerge" in the Western Sahara, Algeria would also reopen its frontiers with Morocco and restore diplomatic relations, the agency said.

Algeria closed its frontier and Morocco broke off relations in 1976 when Polisario guerrillas started their campaign to gain control of Western Sahara.

After restoring relations, Algeria would also "elaborate joint projects (with Morocco) including the gas pipeline which would benefit our western neighbour," Chadli said, adding that the pipeline would go to Spain and the rest of Europe.

Algeria is stepping up exploitation of its extensive natural gas deposits. Morocco has to import most of its energy.

Morocco favours a U.N.-sponsored referendum in the disputed territory, but it rejects U.N. calls, backed by Algeria, for direct talks with Polisario guerrillas before the vote.

## Algeria to supply gas to Greece and Turkey

APS also reported that Algeria will supply Greece with 12 billion cubic metres of natural gas over a 20-year period under an agreement signed Thursday.

## FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1988

## YOUR HOROSCOPE DAILY

From the Cartou-Fighter Institute

**GENERAL TENDENCIES:** You may feel somewhat confused this morning as to how and with whom the day should be spent. Later in the day, however, conditions will clear up and you will feel much more relaxed and confident.

**ARIES** (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) A recent acquaintance could make you feel quite nervous, so steer clear of this person. Get together with some old friends tonight.

**TAURUS** (Apr. 20 to May 20) This is a good day to relax and plan your schedule for the coming week. Enjoy your family and friends, but get plenty of rest tonight.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 21) You may not be in the mood for this morning, so get busy at those little chores which have been waiting for so long.

**CAPIRICORN** (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Wait until later in the day before you make any commitments concerning your activities for the week. Have fun with friends tonight.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Share your ideas with your loved ones. Get together with business associates and clear up some points of misunderstanding between you.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Associate only with your most understanding friends today, but remember that they have problems, too. Be sure to drive carefully.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Be very cautious in any public dealings and don't do anything which might endanger your reputation.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Wait until later in the day before you make any commitments concerning your activities for the week. Have fun with friends tonight.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) New contacts you make today can help you advance quickly in your career. Your status could grow in leaps and bounds.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19 to Mar. 20) Don't rely on any hunches this morning, as they are apt to be quite wrong. Avoid getting into any overly serious discussions with friends.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Don't worry yourself sick over your

finances; they are in better shape than you think. Study your newspaper for some bargains.

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# India sending 15,000 more troops to crush Tigers

**COLOMBO (R)** — India is to boost its troop strength in Sri Lanka to about 70,000 in an attempt to crush stubborn resistance by Tamil rebels, Sri Lankan government officials said Saturday.

The officials said 15,000 additional troops are due to arrive.

Two Indian army brigades are expected before Feb. 10 and a third by end of the month, they said. That would increase the number of brigades in the island to 15.

The reinforcements would be deployed in the eastern district of Trincomalee and in the Vanni Jingles of the north comprising Vavuniya, Mannar and Mullaitivu districts.

"The influx of more troops is to finish the job against the terrorists as soon as possible," a Defense Ministry official said.

Indian military officials here said transport planes arrived at Batticaloa in the east Friday, some of them capable of carrying between 400 to 500 soldiers.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman in New Delhi said: "We have moved additional troops into Batticaloa but I am not going to go into operational details about whether there were eight or 15

planeloads."

Sri Lankan officials said Indian soldiers in Batticaloa have been pursuing rebels from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam who have switched their campaign for a separatist state from the northern provinces to the east.

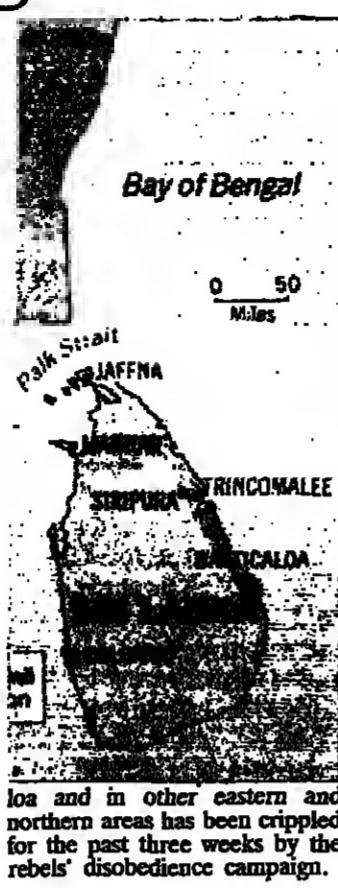
An Indian peacekeeping force was sent to the island's northern and eastern provinces in July when both countries signed a pact to end four years of Tamil separatist war in Sri Lanka.

Military officials said the Tigers had regrouped in Batticaloa after their northern stronghold of Jaffna was wrested from them by Indian soldiers in a major offensive last October.

There are now five Indian brigades in the Jaffna peninsula.

The guerrillas in Batticaloa have staged ambushes on Indian soldiers, called on government workers not to report for work and told businessmen not to open their ships.

Civil administration in Batticaloa



## Thailand continues airstrikes against Laotians

**BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)** — Thai warplanes continued to pound Laotian positions atop a contested border hill Saturday as more Thai soldiers were ordered into the battle, Thai army officers said.

The officers, contacted in Bangkok and near the scene of the fighting, said that troops have retaken about two-thirds of hill 1482 but Laotian artillery fire was slowing down advancing ground troops.

The hill is part of a remote border area contested by both countries. The fighting, which began last November, has escalated in recent days.

The officers, who asked not to be identified by name, said Third Army Commander Lt.-Gen. Siri Thawaphan ordered infantry troops to reinforce Thai forces following reports that Laos had sent more soldiers and artillery pieces into the embattled area.

Artillery duels continued Saturday as the Thais sent U.S.-made F-5 jets against the hilltop. Thailand said one of its F-5s was shot down by a surface-to-air missile last Thursday but denied Laotian claims that a second had been downed earlier.

Army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Chaovarat Yongchayudh told reporters Friday that more than 200 Laotian troops have been killed and 300 to 400 others wounded in the fighting. Returning from an inspection of the battlefield, located some 380 kilometres north of Bangkok, Chaovarat said that the Thais had also destroyed a number of tanks and artillery pieces.

## Several injured in blasts during Bangladesh strike

**DHAKA (R)** — Several people, including a policeman, were injured when anti-government demonstrators set off two bombs in Dhaka hours after the latest opposition-led general strike gripped Bangladesh Saturday.

Police said the bombs, packed with metal fragments, went off outside a court building where officials were receiving documents from candidates in municipal elections.

Witnesses said the stone-throwing demonstrators dispersed quickly after armed police chased them down nearby alleys.

Twenty-one opposition parties called Saturday's strike, the 21st since Nov. 11, in a fresh attempt by President Hossain Mohammad Ershad to resign.

The parties are also organising a boycott of parliamentary elec-

tions scheduled for March 3. The stoppage also paralysed the main port of Chittagong.

Residents said at least five bombs exploded in the city, where strike supporters briefly clashed with police. About a dozen people were arrested but no casualties reported.

Dhaka streets were empty of traffic except for a few government buses, pedal rickshaws and vehicles carrying police.

On a road reserved for the president, ministers and senior officials, small boys played soccer and vendors sold junk foodstuff and toys.

Shops were mostly shuttered and schools closed. Trains and river ferries were disrupted but air carrier Biman, the national airline, said it hoped to operate all scheduled flights although some might be delayed.

## COLUMNS 7 & 8

### Satellites to hunt for water in UAE

**ABU DHABI (R)** — The United States and the United Arab Emirates Saturday signed a four-year agreement under which American satellites will search for water in the desert country, embassy officials said.

### Saudis execute drug smuggler

**RIYADH (R)** — A Chadian was beheaded in the red sea city of Jeddah Friday after confessing to drug smuggling, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. The agency said police found more than 25 million narcotic pills in Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Mohammad's house in addition to 25 cases of alcoholic drinks, banned in Saudi Arabia which follows Islamic Sharia Law. Saudi Arabia introduced capital punishment for drug cases last March and police said drug smuggling had decreased considerably since. Beheadings of drug smugglers, murderers and rapists are carried out in a public square after noon Muslim prayers.

### Gambling is serious problem in China

**PEKING (AP)** — From the nation's pigsties to the homes of Communist Party members, gambling is making a comeback in China, the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday. "Gambling rears its ugly head again," Xinhua warned in reporting that gambling cases increased from 139,000 cases in 1986 to 173,000 cases involving 635,000 people last year. Xinhua said gambling, banned since the Communist takeover in 1949, ranges from dice, poker and billiards to sitting by the road and guessing whether the last digit of a vehicle licence plate will be odd or even. "After the issuing of regulations governing offences against public order last year, gambling activities have become more covert," Xinhua said.

"They are conducted in peasants' homes located in remote mountainous areas, pigsties and credit cooperatives, and even in homes of Communist Party members and cadres." It said stakes sometimes run into the thousands of yuan (3.7 yuan equals one U.S. dollar), several times the annual income of a Chinese farmer, and that gambling has led to family disputes, divorce, graft, embezzlement, robbery and murder.

### One-shot needle proposed

**AMARILLO, Texas (R)** — A possible solution to part of the AIDS problem — needles that drug addicts cannot use more than once — has been developed by a local restaurateur, William Douglass, 34, is seeking a patent on his invention, which is still in the design stage but which he calls absolutely foolproof. The Douglass needle has an internal catch in the syringe which, after the first shot, renders it useless. Reuse of AIDS-infected needles has been cited as a major cause of the disease among intravenous drug users. Douglass came up with the idea while watching a news report about New York City's plan to distribute free needles to drug addicts to help prevent the spread of AIDS. He felt the programme was doomed to failure. "The junkies are going to use those needles more than once," he said. "What about the guy who doesn't get a clean needle? He'll just borrow his friend's needle." Developing the design for the syringe took two weeks. The catch mechanism will cost about one cent per needle, Douglass said. He could not say when his creation might hit the market.

### Olympic village offers free condoms

**CALGARY, Alberta (R)** — Athletes at the Winter Olympics can get free condoms — but they will have to pay if they want soft-porn magazines. The two commodities will be available to the 2,500 competitors expected at the Feb. 13-28 games and reflect what organisers say are realities of life in 1988. "We're not running a Victorian temperance society," said Calgary Olympic Village Mayor Bob Niven of the girlie magazines on sale in the village's store. "We're no different from the world outside." The same philosophy underscores the free condoms policy, which medical officers have instituted to help guard against the sexual transmission of AIDS. "We're not handing out condoms but if an athlete wants them they are available at no cost from the pharmacy," said athlete and emergency services supervisor Annette Heasman. "It's because of the high incidence of AIDS and because public health authorities feel it's in line with preventive care," she said. The Calgary Olympic Village, opened Friday by International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch, will be home to nearly 2,000 athletes and officials during the games, including bob-sledding Crown Prince Albert of Monaco. A further 1,000 athletes, many competitors in exhibition and demonstration sports, are being housed at two more sites outside Calgary.

### Crowd mobs for Michael Jackson tickets

**ROME (AP)** — About 100 fans of Michael Jackson mobbed a Rome bank and disrupted traffic after a local radio station mistakenly announced that tickets for the singer's Italian tour in May would go on sale immediately. Organisers of Jackson's tour said the 430 branches of the Banca Nazionale Del Lavoro would accept orders for the concerts starting Feb. 10 and send tickets to the homes of the concertgoers. But a crowd of young people wove through traffic in front of the bank on Rome's Via Veneto after they heard a morning broadcast on one of the city's private stations, which informed listeners that tickets for the rock star's three concerts in Italy were available immediately at the bank. The bank decided to oblige those who showed up Friday by taking their orders. Jackson will open a European tour with concerts at Rome's 50,000-seat Flaminio Stadium on May 23 and 24. He will perform a third concert on May 29 in the 45,000-seat municipal soccer stadium in the northern city of Turin. Prices for the tickets will range from 36,000 lire to 55,000 lire (\$30 to \$45).

### Reagan feted at surprise party

**WASHINGTON (R)** — President Reagan's wife Nancy and his official family threw a surprise 77th birthday party for America's oldest chief executive Friday that featured the debut of a special song honouring him. "And I used to think I wanted an Oscar," said Reagan, referring to a top film industry award, after Broadway composer Marvin Hamlisch played the song for 70 guests at a luncheon in the White House State Dining Room. Reagan, who seemed genuinely surprised by the birthday fete, will be able to celebrate his 77th birthday Saturday — quipped that since he *now had* a song of his own, "I'm going to take singing lessons." Later Mrs. Reagan, her eyes glistening with tears, gave her husband a hug and kiss as White House officials, members of the cabinet and friends sang "happy birthday."

### Man chained for 6 years after ax attack

**HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)** — A man thought to be insane after he ran amok with an ax was shackled in a hut by his father for six years, a newspaper has reported. Peter Chirimba, 47, was chained by an ox harness around his neck and arms by his 70-year-old father, Munetsi, in the Kuszinga district in north eastern Zimbabwe, the Herald reported. The younger Chirimba was shackled in the hut in 1982. He was provided with food, but had not had a bath until Wednesday, when police took him to a hospital, the newspaper said. His father told the Herald his son was treated by a traditional healer, commonly known as a witch doctor, after the violent outbursts, but afterward he continued to assault members of the family. "I decided to chain him up and lock him in the hut," said the elder Chirimba. Police said they were investigating the case, but viewed it with "understanding."

## Australia pledges aid for Mozambique

**MAPUTO (R)** — Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Bill Hayden pledged continued support for Mozambique when he arrived Friday for a two-day visit to the Marxist southern African nation.

Speaking to reporters at Maputo Airport, Hayden said his visit was linked to this week's meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in Zambia which discussed economic sanctions against South Africa and their possible effect on neighbouring black states heavily dependent on Pretoria.

### GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN  
AND OMAR SHARIF

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#### TRICKS OUT OF STRAW

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
♦Q 8 4	♦J 10 6		
♦K 6 5	♦A Q 3		
♦A 6 2			
WEST	EAST		
♦7 3	♦A Q 9 4		
♦8 6 5	♦J 9 5 3		
♦9			
The bidding:			
North	East	South	West
1 NT	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		
Opening lead: Queen of ♦			

Desperate tactics usually end up costing tricks. But once in a while a hand will crop up where the astute player will realize he must resort to the bizarre if his side is to have any chance. If he is successful, the results can be flabbergasting.

South probed for a major suit in his partner's hand with his Stayman: two-club bid, then offered his partner a choice of contracts with his jump to three spades. North showed a maximum no trump with diamond strength, but that was the last thing South wanted to hear.

## White House temporarily accepts contra aid defeat

**WASHINGTON (R)** — White House officials said they would sit back sceptically and watch how Central American peace efforts unfold without the pressure of U.S. military aid to Nicaragua's contra rebels.

U.S. officials said the administration had no other choice following the congressional defeat of President Reagan's bid to send the contras an additional \$36.25 million in aid which would have included \$3.6 million for weapons.

"But our only recourse now is to see if it does," he said.

Fitzwater left open the possibility Reagan would ask again for military aid if by Feb. 29, when current assistance expires, there had not been sufficient progress towards a ceasefire in Nicaragua.

Sandinistas and contra officials have met once to discuss a ceasefire as part of a Central American peace plan, signed by the region's five presidents last August, that sought an end to guerrilla wars and democratic reforms in the region.

It became Reagan's worst foreign scandal.

After Congress defeated the aid over Reagan's insistence that military pressure was needed to make Managua's Sandinista government comply with a regional peace plan, the White House said Central America would take on the burden.

"Now the major burden shifts to the other Democratic (Central American) countries to keep

pressure on the Sandinistas to negotiate honestly and expeditiously," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater told reporters Friday.

He proclaimed the 219-211 House of Representatives defeat of the aid package Wednesday "a vote down for freedom because we're very sceptical if it will work."

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The test was the first carried out by Moscow this year and the 17th since the Soviet Union ended a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing last February.

## Soviets conduct nuclear test

**MOSCOW (R)** — The Soviet Union conducted an underground nuclear test explosion Saturday at its site in Semipalatinsk in central Asia, TASS news agency reported.

TASS said the explosion, with a yield of up to 20 kilotonnes, was carried out at 7:20 a.m. Moscow time.

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